



ADDRESS BY THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS GRAND MASTER

The Most Illustrious Grand Master addressed the Companions as follows:

'Companions, I am delighted to see so many of you. I bid a very warm welcome to you all and thank you for showing your loyalty and support, not only to those Companions who are receiving preferment today, but also to those of you who have travelled to support them and to enjoy lunch together afterwards, thus making it a great day of celebration. It is good to see you here all together, because, as it says in an old Kenyan proverb: "Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable." So, it is heartening to see you all here showing such strength in numbers and demonstrating your unbreakable spirit.

'I am very conscious of the fact that as your Grand Master my tenure is an annual one, subject always to the wishes of all of you – in that bundle – and therefore, I thank you once again for my re-appointment, which leaves me looking forward to the ensuing year with excited anticipation and humble determination. I know that I speak on behalf of all of you when I congratulate those Companions who I have appointed to Grand Council rank and promoted in it. This Annual Investiture is a major milestone in your Cryptic career, and I trust that you will remember today for a long time to come. I must pause here and reflect upon the words submitted by Grand Chaplain, following the 'In Memoriam', in echoing all our sadness at the passing to the Grand Council above of R.III.Comp. John Prizeman, P.G.Chan. – even more so, as he was today to be promoted to Past Deputy Grand Master. You will need no reminding that your new status brings with it new duties, new horizons and new dignity. Work together with your junior colleagues and set high standards. Do the best you can until you know better, then when you know better – do better. Remember only the mediocre are always at their best. I wish you all good fortune as you continue to increase your efforts on our behalf to stimulate the progress of the Order.

'It has been a busy year for the Active Officers, and I thank them all enormously for their generous and enthusiastic support, I look forward to working with the members of the new team who I am confident be equally as eager and diligent.

'The President and Members of the Executive have had a fairly easy run, and even the District Grand Masters Annual Conference was a most civilised affair, as were the activities of Keith Hind Council. I thank the committee for their sage counsel and all of the team, from the most senior officer to the most junior, for their loyal support.

'Further to the subject of promotions and appointments, there have been some changes at District and Inspectorate level. There is now a new District Grand Master for London, in the person of Simon White in consequence of the retirement of Vincent Driver. Simon, please stand and be recognised. Andrew Dive is now District Grand Master for Kent and Derek Upton is the new Grand Inspector for the Channel Islands. We offer them our congratulations and best wishes for an enjoyable and successful tenure. There are also to be some further changes later in the year as certain District Grand Masters have declared their wish and intention to hang up their chains. Therefore, attending their last Grand Council in that capacity are Neil Woodward, District Grand Master for North and East Yorkshire; Ken Downes, District Grand Master for Wyvern; and Jeremy Shaw, District Grand Master for Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight. I will install their successors later in the year. I am sure that you are eager to know who they are so I will tell you. I have appointed Geoffery Rankin for North and East Yorkshire, Mark Winfield for Wyvern, and Peter Dack for Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight. They will all be installed at their next respective District Grand Meetings. Arthur Thomas, who is currently Deputy District Grand Master in Charge of the South and East Caribbean, following the retirement of Llewellyn Gill, will be installed later this year. I am sure that you will wish to join me in congratulating the newcomers, and thanking their predecessors for the wonderful contribution they have made to their Districts and to the Order. We wish them a very happy retirement.

'I continue with my expressions of gratitude now to all my District Grand Masters and Grand Inspectors, here today in their entirety, for your unstinting support, energy and endeavour in the superintendence of your charges. I know that during the past year, you have all basked in the delight of delivering the allotted proceeds of the sesquicentenary charity appeal to local worthy causes within your Districts. A pleasing success. The fact that you are all so successful is not by chance, or that I am a brilliant judge of character! It is because you subscribe to the essential principles, posited a long time ago by Joseph Addison, a 17th century writer who maintained: "If you wish to succeed, make perseverance your bosom friend, experience your wise councillor, caution your elder brother and hope your guardian genius." I am also heartened by the presence today of Custodians of the Ninth Arch, and Past District Grand Masters and Inspectors, no doubt keeping a watchful eye of their successors.

'Now to give you a snapshot of our activities. Shortly after Grand Council last year I consecrated Carolean Council No. 347 for Warwickshire, and in early June I attended the District Meeting of North and East Yorkshire. Late June saw the installation of Derek Upton and Simon White. In July, I attended the Annual Meeting of Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, and visited Far East Council No. 156 in Hong Kong. August heralded the delightful Croft Dinner hosted by the generous auspices of the District Grand Master for Northumberland. In mid-September, I attended Peter Baikie's funeral and in early October visited Merthyr Tydfil Council No. 120. In November, I presented a wreath on behalf of the Order at the National Memorial Arboretum and installed Andrew Dive.

In January, I visited Keith Hind Council in London, and presented a centenary certificate to Public Schools Council No. 37. Towards the end of that month, I had the pleasure of presenting a fifty-year membership certificate to R.III.Comp. Desmond Payne-Jeremiah in Swansea. In February, I consecrated Prins van Oranje Council No. 348 in Brussels, an unattached Council that will meet in Antwerp. I also made a return visit to Merthyr Tydfil, to witness a three team Royal Master event and unveiled a delightful marble plaque they had generously presented to me, commemorating my visits. I will admit to checking the obverse to ensure it didn't say "In loving Memory!" And only last week, I visited Kent to see the District Grand Master install his new team at an especial emergency meeting.

In addition to their involvement in consecrations and installations, the Deputy Grand Master and Grand Principal Conductor of the Work have also shared in the heavy lifting by making visits to East Anglia, East Midlands, Somerset and Wiltshire, Lancashire, Cumberland and Westmorland and to Wessex and Sole Bay Councils. I am indebted to the Deputy Grand Master for presiding over Grafton Council of Anointed Kings No. 16 at the February conferral of the Silver Trowel and Excellent Masters whist I was overseas.

Both these degrees continue to maintain their popular appeal. I thank the members of No. 16 and all the Installed Masters Councils for the splendid work they do in this direction.

The year ahead will see the installation of new District Grand Masters, as I have mentioned, and the reponement of Councils in Cumberland and Westmorland, London, and the Caribbean, together with two centenary celebrations and two fifty-year membership certificate presentations. A busy and rewarding year just gone by and an interesting and challenging one coming up.

I now move on to one of the most agreeable aspects of this meeting, which is the opportunity to welcome visitors from our daughter Grand Councils, from overseas and the Rulers of our Companion Orders. May I ask you to refrain from your usual affectionate acclamation until I have finished:

From our Daughter Grand Council of South East Asia, the Grand Master, M.III.Comp. Dr Harry Chin, accompanied by your G.D.C., V.III.Comp. Ian Ellston. Harry. I am sorry that I cannot get to your meeting this year as I will be engaged on duties in London, but it is good to see you again;

From the Grand Council of Greece, the Grand Master, M.III.Comp. Vasillios Papanikolaou, accompanied by your Grand Recorder, V.III.Comp. Konstantinos Karmarlis, and V.III.Comp. Dennis Wilson, Past Grand Chaplain – it was good to be with you last year;

And from the Grand Council of Cryptic Mason of Utah, M.III.Comp. Jason C Varner, P.G.M. – Utah, known I understand as the Beehive State. Famous for fry sauce and funeral potatoes. Good to see you again Jason;

From Sri Lanka, R.III.Comp. David Rose, P.G.Coun.;
From the Inspectorate of Jamaica and Cayman Islands, the Grand Inspector, R.III.Comp. Harding Overton Watler, P.G.Coun., accompanied by R.III.Comp. Graham Smith, IX, P.G.Insp., and P.Dist.G.M. for Kent; Ill.Comp. Albert Anderson Jnr, P.G.Cond.C. – a recipient today; Ill.Comp. Neville Scott Snr, JP, G.Cond.C. – a recipient today; Ill.Comp. Robert Whorms; Ill.Comp. Bryan Lewis Ashenheim, P.A.G.D.C. – a recipient today; and Comp. Neville Anthony Scott Jnr;
From the Channel Islands, V.III.Comp. Derek Arthur Upton, Grand Inspector; accompanied by Ill.Comp. Ian Crosby, P.G.Cond.C., who was installed on the same day as Derek but in the AMD!;
From the District of South and East Caribbean, Ill.Comp. John Aspinall, MBE, P.G.Capt.Gd., and Ill.Comp. Ignatius Jean, P.G.Swd.B. – both recipients today;
From South Africa, Ill.Comp. Reginald Garnet Marshall, P.G.Cond.C. – thank you for making such a long journey to be with us today;
And the usual invasion from Flanders Council No. 177 (Unattached – Belgium) in the persons of Illustrious Companions Gilbert Denys, P.G.St.B.; Geoffrey Declan Kavanagh, P.G.St.B., a recipient today; Pierre Ambrody; Jean Verbist; and Comp. Michael Kavanagh;

From Koning Salomo Council No. 293 (Unattached – The Netherlands), Illustrious Companions A. G. M. (Loek) Captijn, P.G.Cond.C., and Pieter Jan Nagel, P.A.G.D.C. – both recipients today;

'It is always comforting to have the support of the Heads of our Companion Orders, so with equal enthusiasm I welcome:

R.III.Comp. Prof. Denovan Keith Wilson, P.Dist.G.M. (Durham) – Dep.G.M., Mark and RAM;

R.III.Comp. Paul Clement, OStJ, P.G.Chan. – M.E. & S.G.M. of the United Orders of the Temple;

R.III.Comp. Graham Flight, P.G.Chan. – Grand Sovereign, Red Cross of Constantine;

R.III.Comp. Tom Jackson, P.G.Chan. – Grand Master, Allied Masonic Degrees;

R.III.Comp. Andrew Sweeney, P.G.Chan. – Grand Supreme Ruler, Order of the Secret Monitor;

R.III.Comp. Dr Paul Mycock, P.G.Chan. – First Grand Master Mason of the Operatives;

R.III.Comp. Christopher Maiden, P.G.Chan. – Grand High Priest, KTP and Order of HW;

R.III.Comp. Dr Vivian Thomas, JP, P.G.Chan., G.Chap. (a recipient today) – Grand Master, KBHC;

R.III.Comp. Anthony Llewellyn, P.G.Chan. (a recipient today) – Supreme Magus, Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia;

'It is also wonderful to have Richard Gan, JP, IX, P.G.P.C.W., and Grand Historiographer, in attendance. Companions, our distinguished visitors.

'My prime objective continues to be to enhance the strength and development of the Order, thus making it readily available to Craft, Royal Arch and Mark Masons. The successful growth of our Order will be promoted and encouraged by investing energy and care in keeping our Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters vibrant and relevant. You know the quality of candidates we would welcome, who would enhance your Councils and in return reap the rewards of Cryptic Masonry.

'Regarding the health and well-being of the Order, I am happy to say without an ounce of complacency that I am quite pleased with our current situation. But we must maintain the current swell of enthusiasm, so keep it going. I want to return to and underline that word 'Quality'. If we provide quality of commitment, quality ritual and ceremonial, we will attract quality candidates which will build and sustain quality Councils. Steve Jobs, the former CEO of Apple said of this: "Be a yardstick of quality. Some people are not used to an environment where excellence is expected." Provide that excellence, Companions, and maintain it.

'Companions, I cannot conclude this meeting without drawing to your attention once again to the great debt of gratitude we owe to those who organise, administer and direct Cryptic Masonry throughout the year in general, and at this meeting in particular. I refer to the Grand Recorder and his staff at No. 86 for the administrative excellence of this meeting. Grand Recorder, please convey to all on the 4th floor how much we value what they do on our behalf and thank them for their patience and courtesy, which is shown to us at all times, and this of course includes you!

'I thank the Grand Director of Ceremonies and his team for all the preparations, arrangements and ceremonial executed not only at this meeting but throughout the year. Executed, I might add with all the dignity, precision and professionalism that is as good as you will see anywhere else.

'Our thanks go to John Vasquez and his colleagues for the support and assistance we receive here at Freemasons' Hall. Companion G.D.C., if you can find him, will you present W.Bro. John Vasquez to me please. John, sadly you are not in this Order so I cannot promote you, but you have been a loyal servant to us for many years. Over those years your help has been invaluable and on more than one occasion you have, at the last minute, saved our bacon. Please accept this token of our appreciation.

'Companions, we have had another good year, so let us make the effort to have an even better one this year and I leave you with the words of Robert Browning: "Aspire, break bonds, endeavour to be good and better still – be best". This Order is very special Companions – please keep it that way.

'Finally, Companions, be of one mind, live in peace and may the Supreme Master of the Universe delight to dwell amongst you and bless you for evermore.'